

**SPAM CONTROL SYSTEM REQUIRING UNAUTHORIZED SENDERS TO PAY
POSTAGE THROUGH AN INTERNET PAYMENT SERVICE WITH PROVISION
FOR REFUND ON ACCEPTED MESSAGES**

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An e-mail service system maintains co-operative interaction with a payment service system to provide the capability to control unsolicited e-mail messages commonly known as spam. Each e-mail account maintains an exception list of addresses. E-mail from an addresser on that list is accepted without postage. E-mail from an addresser not on the exception list is accepted if the postage is paid. Otherwise, the e-mail is returned to the sender along with a notification. Postage is refunded to the sender if the addressee sends a reply e-mail to the sender or adds the sender to the exception list. Provision is made to include automatically in the exception list anyone to whom the account holder has sent e-mail. Each account holder typically set the postage amount required to accept e-mails from unauthorized senders.

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